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**DUTCH FORK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Roland Hakes of Dutch Fork HS as its 2011-12 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hakes is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Dutch Fork HS.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Hakes as South Carolina's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Hakes joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Kevin Garnett (1992-93, Maudlin HS, S.C.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-10 senior raced to a second consecutive Class AAAA individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:10, leading the Silver Foxes to fourth place as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Hakes won the Run Wild Festival, the SCTCCA Coaches Classic, the Region 7-AAAA meet and Class AAAA Lower State championships. The Runner of the Year as named by SCRrunners.com, he placed eighth at the 2009 Class AAAA state meet as a sophomore and finished 16th in 2008 as a freshman.

Also a track standout, Hakes has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. In addition to serving as a lifeguard at a community pool, he has volunteered in association with his church youth group.

"Roland is an amazing individual and student-athlete," said Dutch Fork head coach Barry Lindler. "He's focused and understands the goal of the training program. He understands patience and the value of hard work. His focus is always what's best for the team, and he never seeks recognition for his accomplishments. Roland takes every race as a learning experience, analyzes everything and applies what he learns."

Hakes remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

The Gatorade Player of the Year program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by ESPNHS and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hakes joins Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Aaron Ramirez (2009-10, 2008-09, Woodmont) and Luke Lovelace (2007-08, Chapin) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners, and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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